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## Calling Out or Calling Off: The Implications of a Narrowing Social Justice Practice

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Maxfield, Mary, "Calling Out or Calling Off: The Implications of a Narrowing Social Justice Practice" (2015). *Graduate Communication Association Conference*. 9.  
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Multi-faceted concepts of identity and oppression – including Kimberle Crenshaw’s theory of “intersectionality” and the Combahee River Collective’s work on “interlocking oppressions” – increasingly shape the practice of social justice advocacy and activism, particularly on university campuses. While these theories greatly enhance common understanding of the complexity of oppression, they can be paradoxically internalized, institutionalized, and practiced in ways that undermine that same nuance. Essentially, the understanding that any individual occupies the intersection of specific identity markers or oppressive systems can be diluted into an identity politics that replaces unique, fluid subject positions with caricatures of static, uniform “identity.” In other words, the notion that individual subjects experience interacting oppressions based on race, class, gender, sexuality, et cetera, dissolves into the presumption that everyone within a specific combination of identity groups experiences those identities the same way, without changes between subjects or within subjects across time.

This paper challenges the degradation of these theories by investigating them in the context of contemporary use on college campuses and linking them to theoretical work on subjectivity, specifically from cultural theorists Louis Althusser and Judith Butler. By returning the concept of a fluid subject to the intersectional framework, this project hopes to inform a more complex student activism.